

E t h i c o n
CREDIT UNION

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August 10, 2009

Jennifer J. Johnson, Secretary
Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
20th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20551

Re: Docket No. R-1364 – The Credit CARD Act of 2009

Dear Ms. Johnson,

I am writing you today to share with you the concerns I have with ETHICON Credit Union's ability to comply with certain aspects of The Credit CARD Act of 2009 (CARD Act). I would like to share our support for the original intent of the CARD Act, which was to reign in unscrupulous credit card lenders that engage in abusive and predatory practices. I do not understand why this Act included anything other than Credit Cards.

While we support the original scope of the CARD Act, one particular component has led to a tremendous burden on our credit union as well as the credit union industry that, in my opinion, will ultimately harm consumers. Under the Act, creditors must adopt reasonable policies and procedures to ensure that periodic statements for any open-end consumer credit account are mailed or delivered at least 21 days before the payment is due in order to be able to charge a late fee, or to otherwise consider the payment late. This 21-day requirement will apply to all open-end consumer credit. This is in contrast to most other provisions of the CARD Act, which are limited to credit cards.

Our Credit Union provides members with consolidated statements that combine information about all savings, checking, and loan accounts that the member has with the credit union. Our members appreciate and prefer consolidated statements, as opposed to receiving multiple statements. Also, for the financial benefit of our members, our credit union allows members to choose weekly, biweekly, or monthly payments and designate the due dates for their payments, often to coincide with when they receive payroll deposits, all of which will need to be changed in order to comply with these provisions...ultimately harming the members of ETHICON Credit Union. If the intent of the regulation was to help consumers, then why include a provision that will harm them.

We are firm in our belief that this change will have quite the opposite effect of the original intent. In particular:

Negative Impact on Consumers

- The law change will likely have an unintended adverse impact on consumers as it could cause many financial institutions to re-evaluate the current grace-periods on open-end loans. Currently, most credit unions already include grace periods in their loan processes...often as long as 10-15 days after the payment due date...before considering a payment as late. Though most credit unions will probably not want to shorten the grace period, depending on how the data processing system works, credit unions may not have a choice because that grace period would “flow over” to the next due date.
- One potential solution is to rewrite existing loans. However, this will inconvenience members who do not understand why their existing loan agreements have to be changed.

Negative Impact on Credit Unions

- Are credit unions being asked to abrogate existing legal contracts?
- Current data processing systems cannot support multiple statement dates, dues dates, payment dates, etc. and will have to be reprogrammed. This will lead to increased expenses, all of which will ultimately be borne by the consumer. There is not enough time to implement all the changes prior to the August 20, 2009 deadline due to our processing needing 30 to 90 days notice for any major changes.
- Increased postage expenses...which will be passed on to the consumer.
- Multiple statements sent to the same member...likely leading confusion on behalf of the member.
- Possible conversion to all closed-end lending processes. This is potentially viable solution, but member convenience is impacted...leading to fewer loans at credit unions.

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- Change existing due dates. This is a manual, very time-consuming, process that would have to be agreed to by members...many of which will not understand why a change is necessary.

I would like to thank the Federal Reserve for allowing me to share the concerns of complying with this provision of the CARD Act. I would also ask that the Agency consider the implications on consumers and allow for, at a minimum, an extension of the effective date of the regulation.

Sincerely,

Deborah Beam

President

Ethicon Credit Union